DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 389 041 EA 027 074

AUTHOR	Damianova-Ivanova, Antoaneta
TITLE	Secondary Education in Bulgaria. Guide to Secondary Education in Europe Series.
INSTITUTION	Council of Europe, Strasbourg (France).
REPORT NO	ISBN-92-871-2743-3
PUB DATE	95
NOTE	49p.; For a similar report on Denmark, see EA 027 072.
AVAILABLE FROM	Council of Europe Publications, Manhattan Publishing Company, 468 Albany Post Road, P.O. Box 850, Croton-on-Hudson, NY 10520.
PUB TYPE	Reports - Descriptive (141)
EDRS PRICE	MF01 Plus Postage. PC Not Available from EDRS.
DESCRIPTORS	Curriculum Design; Educational Finance; *Educational Policy; *Foreign Countries; School Administration; School Organization; School Personnel; *Secondary Education; Student Evaluation
IDENTIFIERS	*Bulgaria

ABSTRACT

This publication, part of a series entitled "Guide to Secondary Education in Europe," contains a brief description of secondary education in Bulgaria. Chapter 1 offers a general overview of Bulgarian education, including educational policy and innovation, research and development, and information delivery services. The second and third chapters describe educational finance, budgets, and the school-society relationship. Other chapters cover the administration and organization of the education system, education and culture, curriculum, student evaluation, school personnel, and European-influenced components of Bulgarian secondary education. The appendix contains three figures and three tables. (LMI)

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Collection
Education

Secondary education in Bulgaria

Council of Europe Press

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Secondary education in Bulgaria

by Antoaneta Damianova-Ivanova

Guide to secondary education in Europe
Editor Denis Kallen

A secondary education for Europe
Council for Cultural Co-operation

Council of Europe Press, 1995

3

French edition:
L'enseignement secondaire en Bulgarie
ISBN 92-871-2742-5

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Cover design: Atelier de création graphique, Council of Europe

Publishing and Documentation Service
Council of Europe
F-67075 Strasbourg Cedex

ISBN 92-871-2743-3
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Printed in the Netherlands

The **Council of Europe** was founded in 1949 to achieve greater unity between European parliamentary democracies. It is the oldest of the European political institutions and has thirty-four member states,[1] including the fifteen members of the European Union. It is the widest intergovernmental and interparliamentary grouping in Europe, and has its headquarters in the French city of Strasbourg.

Only questions related to national defence are excluded from the Council of Europe's work, and the Organisation has activities in the following areas: democracy, human rights and fundamental freedoms; media and communication; social and economic affairs; education, culture, heritage and sport; youth, health, environment and regional planning; local democracy; and legal co-operation.

The **European Cultural Convention** was opened for signature in 1954. This international treaty is open to European countries that are not members of the Council of Europe, and it enables them to take part in the Organisation's programmes on education, culture, sport and youth. So far, forty-three states have acceded to the European Cultural Convention; the Council of Europe's full member states plus Albania, Belarus, Bosnia-Herzegovina, Croatia, the Holy See, Moldova, Monaco, Russia and Ukraine.

The **Council for Cultural Co-operation** (the CDCC) is responsible for the Council of Europe's work on education and culture. Four specialised committees – the Education Committee, the Standing Conference on University Problems, the Culture Committee and the Cultural Heritage Committee – help the CDCC to carry out its tasks under the European Cultural Convention. There is also a close working relationship between the CDCC and the regular conferences of specialised European ministers responsible for education, culture and cultural heritage.

The CDCC's programmes are an integral part of the Council of Europe's work, and, like the programmes in other sectors, they contribute to the Organisation's three overarching policy objectives for the 1990s:

– the protection, reinforcement and promotion of human rights and fundamental freedoms and pluralist democracy;

– the promotion of an awareness of European identity;

1. Andorra, Austria, Belgium, Bulgaria, Czech Republic, Cyprus, Denmark, Estonia, Finland, France, Germany, Greece, Hungary, Iceland, Ireland, Italy, Latvia, Liechtenstein, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Malta, Netherlands, Norway, Poland, Portugal, Romania, San Marino, Slovak Republic, Slovenia, Spain, Sweden, Switzerland, Turkey, United Kingdom.

– the search for common responses to the great challenges facing European society.

The CDCC's education programme covers school, higher and adult education, as well as educational research. At present, its main priorities are projects on: the European dimension of secondary education; university co-operation; adult education and social change; modern languages; and the pooling of the results of educational research.

In 1991, the Council for Cultural Co-operation of the Council of Europe launched a project entitled: "A secondary education for Europe". The aims of the project are to:

– give young people the knowledge, skills and attitudes they will need to meet the major challenges of European society;

– prepare young people for higher education and for mobility, work and daily life in a multilingual and multicultural democratic Europe;

– make young people aware of their common cultural heritage and their shared responsibilities as Europeans.

This project has two elements: the first devoted to reflections and consultations among the member states on the overall policies and strategies, and the second on the European dimension in the school curriculum.

The series entitled "Guide to secondary education in Europe" sets out to present in a synthetic form – country by country – the major elements of secondary education structures and policies that exist in CDCC member states.

Each guide has been written, on the basis of a common analysis, by experts designated by the authorities in each country concerned.

Denis Kallen has undertaken the difficult task of the general co-ordination of this series, guaranteeing its coherence and thus allowing comparisons to be made among countries.

Given that this is a field in which developments sometimes take place very quickly and are of an almost permanent nature, it is possible that, despite the considerable efforts made to take into account the latest reforms in the pipeline, certain changes may have taken place since the manuscript was originally received.

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I. General

One of Bulgaria's achievements after the liberation from Ottoman rule in 1878 was to create a modern European education system. The striving for education underlies the centuries-old traditions of the Bulgarian people.

The fact that up until the second world war many Bulgarians enrolled in and graduated with honours from some of Europe's top universities proves the merits of Bulgarian secondary education.

It is due to the good traditions maintained in Bulgarian education that the totalitarian regime, established in the post-war years, failed to completely destroy its inherent merits.

Under totalitarian rule, Bulgarian secondary education suffered from excessive "ideologisation" (especially in the humanities and social sciences), from control exercised solely by the intertwined party and state administration, from a strongly centralised, hierarchical and bureaucratic management, from teachers' low social status and lack of prestige, and from the existence of a chain of élite schools for the children of the nomenclature, masked behind lip service to equal chances for all in education.

The processes of overall democratisation, which started at the end of 1989, conditioned the removal of these negative aspects in the education system.

Schools in Bulgaria are state-owned (public) or municipal. Furthermore, 1992 saw the opening of private schools (foreign, foreign with Bulgarian participation and religious schools – elementary, pre-secondary and vocational).

In the light of the Regulations for the Application of the Law for Public Education, public schools are mainly financed from the state budget, by the Ministry of Education and Science or by other ministries and central public institutions. Municipal schools are funded mainly from the budgets of their municipal councils. Private schools are schools created by Bulgarian or foreign naturals who use their own or hired facilities, and partially or fully pay for their upkeep.

Public and municipal schools are opened, transformed and closed by the Minister of Science and Education in response to a well-motivated proposal from a ministry, a central public department or a municipal council.

Private schools are opened (or closed down) by an order of the Minister of Science and Education in response to a well-motivated request made by the natural or the juridical person in question. They can be closed if there is a violation of the Regulations for Application of the Law for Public Education.

The Regulations for the Application of the Law for Public Education, published in the *State Gazette No. 31* of 14 April 1992 and amended and supplemented in 1993, provide a procedure for the opening of private schools, according to which, by 31 March of the year in which the opening of the school is planned, the following documents should be submitted to the Ministry of Science and Education:

- application to the minister;
- project for a contract with the parents;
- project for a plan of studies for the school or for a programme for education of children in the kindergarten;
- declaration signed by the applicant(s) stating that the signatory shall abide by the state education requirements for the respective type and level of school or kindergarten;
- document testifying that facilities are provided for in the school/kindergarten;
- permit from the local body of the Hygiene and Epidemiology Inspection Service;
- contract with a medical establishment, providing medical services to pupils or children;
- information about the principal and teachers in the school, including data on their specialisations, teaching certificates and qualifications;
- copy of the legalised registration permit if the applicant is a juridical person, or a certificate of no previous conviction if the applicant is a natural person;
- declaration stating that sufficient manuals and technical means are provided for the proper conduct of the education process;
- document testifying that a fee was paid to the state under the tariffs of fees collectable in the system of public education;
- copy of the letter of advice sent to the mayor of the respective municipality.

1. Education policy and innovation

Under the Bulgarian Constitution, education in Bulgaria is compulsory until the age of 16 and free of charge in public and municipal schools. The Law for Public Education, passed by the Grand National Assembly on 1 October 1991, provides for the establishment of private schools (and such schools have already been established) in which payment is shared by the parents and the state. The same policy is followed in higher education. In the public educational establishments, education is totally free of charge. In some of the public higher education establishments, however, new fee-paying specialisations have been introduced, which so far are not controlled by the state. On the other hand, three fee-paying non-governmental universities have been established.

The structure, function and management of the education system are regulated by the Law for Public Education and by the Regulations for the Application of the Law for Public Education (see appendix).

The Ministry of Science and Education is the public institution in charge of implementing the national policy for science and education. Its functions are defined by the Council of Ministers. The ministry's major function is to formulate the objectives of education. These objectives aim at structuring an educational system so as to provide permanent education. This ensures:

- mastery of basic foundations and laws of human knowledge;
- adoption of universal and national values, virtues and culture;
- development of the individual personality and encouragement of creative capacities;
- spiritual, physical and social development, and of a healthy way of life;
- mastery of the different education levels and success in professional qualifications.

As an instrument of state policy, the Ministry of Science and Education regulates enrolment in secondary vocational education by means of a state-defined quota for the training of (highly) skilled labour to meet the needs of the labour-market. Support for the education of the state-defined quota of students is guaranteed in the state budget. A Standing Parliamentary Commission for Education and Science works with the National Assembly.

The Higher Education Council is a body of experts operating through specialised expert commissions. The council consists of twenty-seven members each with at least ten years of service in the education system. They are appointed by the ministers. Nine of the council's members are practising teachers nomi-

nated by the National Teachers Council, three are appointed by an order of the minister. The remaining fifteen members are scientific or professional staff working in education. The Higher Education Council is chaired *ex officio* by the Minister for Science and Education.

The council's functions and activities only concern secondary education. In Bulgaria, higher education institutions are autonomous, including in matters of curricula and the training of academic staff. The Council of University and High School Rectors is a consultative body for maintaining the contact between the ministry and the administrations of the above-mentioned institutions.

The co-ordination and control functions at the regional level are entrusted to twenty-eight regional education inspectorates. They are directly subordinated to the ministry and are in charge of implementing state educational policy in their territory (region).

As bodies of self-government in the regions, the municipal councils are directly concerned with the management of the education system; ensuring within the scope of their powers:

- the instruction of children in the compulsory school age group;
- medical services and the security of kindergartens, schools and children;
- the procurement of money for the upkeep, construction, outfitting and repairs of schools and kindergartens;
- provision of school canteens, boarding houses, recreation and sports facilities, and the transportation of pupils and teachers;
- scholarships and other special grants.

The education system is regulated by uniform and generally valid education requirements laid down by the state and are obligatory for all institutions.

In public education, the teaching of ideological or religious doctrines is forbidden. In the public schools, religious issues are treated only within their historical, philosophical and cultural context in the course of the different subjects.

Education is conducted in the literary Bulgarian language. Pupils whose mother tongue is not Bulgarian may opt to study in their own language, provided there is sufficient demand ("sufficient" means at least seven pupils, according to the ministry; this is provided for in Article 17, paragraph 3, of the Ministry of Science and Education's Ordinance No. 2/1990). Education until the age of 16 is compulsory for all Bulgarian citizens.

Students in public and municipal schools, in line with their right to free education, do not pay fees. They are free to use all school facilities for education and for the advancement of their interests and capabilities, and receive scholarships or grants from the state under certain conditions. They receive manuals each year free of charge.

Administrative texts provide for three types of scholarship and grant at the secondary level:

- scholarships for merit;
- social grants to pupils from low income families;
- private grants.

Each student with marks ranging within the 5,25-6 bracket (on a six-point scale) in the profile-oriented schools and within the 5,50-6 bracket in all other secondary schools is entitled to a scholarship for merit. The scholarship amounts to 35% of the minimum national income.

Students with marks no lower than 4 points and a monthly family income below the average minimum salary receive social grants amounting to 30% of the minimum income.

The ministry has no information on the third type of grant.

Pupils in secondary education who do not meet any of the above conditions but whose family's income is less than 65% of the minimum are entitled to social allowances under the provisions of the Social Aid Regulations adopted by Decree No. 46 of the Council of Ministers of 25 March 1991.

In the 1992/93 academic year, the total number of scholarships and grants for both groups was estimated at 120 000.

The size of grants and allowances is set by administrative regulations and calculated on the basis of the nationwide established minimum salary, which implies that they are regularly updated.

2. Research and development

Scientific research on secondary education is co-ordinated by the ministry. Between 1950 and 1992, a large unit for fundamental and applied research, publication of scientific works and popularisation of scientific results operated, initially as a pedagogical institute with the Academy of Sciences and after 1964 as the Research Institute in Education within the Ministry of Public Education. Researchers produced statements and evaluations of projects and programmes of national importance and engaged in experimental and other

activities. The programmes had a rather broad scope, both in terms of the variety of scientific domains (didactics; pedagogics; methods of instruction in the various disciplines; pedagogical psychology; pedagogical sociology; history of education; comparative pedagogics, economy of education), and in terms of praxis-oriented work on behalf of the various education levels and forms (pre-school pedagogics; family upbringing; secondary education; higher education; education for adults; detection and advancement of gifted children).

In April 1992 the institute ceased to exist. A National Research Centre for Education and Science (NRCES) was created, which concentrates on scientific research, analysis and information, expert and consultation work, research into qualifications and publishing. From the functional point of view, the centre is a unit within the Ministry of Science and Education. It provides scientific and information services to other bodies occupied with training and with the pursuance of the national education and science policy (councils, commissions, foundations). The newly-created centre's programmes are aimed at creating a national framework for educational, science and technological policy; defining the principles of educational reform in the transition period; secondary education standards; policy towards children from disadvantaged social backgrounds.

The centre has a staff of 159. It has a Programme Council, which determines its programme of work, approved by the ministry. At present the NRCES works on eighteen research themes. Among the major ones are: "Differentiation of curricula in non-university higher education: diagnosis and evaluation of programme approach"; "Introduction of experimental programmes for instruction in market economics in secondary schools"; "Secondary education in the period of transition to a market economy"; "Problems of the civic education of students"; "Interaction of school and environment"; "Evaluation of curriculum contents for the natural and mathematic disciplines".

Research into secondary education is also carried out in the higher education establishments, in the pedagogical institutes for teacher training and in the methodological departments of the non-university higher education establishments.

3. Information servicing

The NRCES data-processing unit develops and maintains factual databases on parameters of the education system in compliance with world-wide statistical standards and in response to the needs of the national science and education policy. It develops and maintains scientific literature reference sys-

tems, official documentation and legislation on science and education in Bulgaria and abroad. It develops data systems that service the specific needs of the educational policy-making bodies.

The NRCES data-processing unit regularly collects data on three large educational sectors:

- pre-school pedagogics and secondary education;[1]
- higher education;
- other systems.

The first sector registers data on: pedagogical experts; numbers of schools; enrolment plans for vocational schools; data on the buildings housing schools and kindergartens; implementation of enrolment plans; enrolments in kindergartens; budget allocations in pre-school and secondary education; the model of accruing and distributing the salaries fund; staff numbers in pre-school and secondary education; legislative documents on education; documents on financial regulations; the control of decisions; the movement of students; authors and reviewers of school documentation; the technological schedule for the development of school documentation; children not covered by the compulsory school system; enrolment ratios in full-time education; numbers of school classes, teachers and students at the beginning of the academic year.

The second sector of the data-processing system under the heading "higher education" refers to data on: the plan for the various academic disciplines; exchanges of experience between researchers and teachers; Bulgarian students abroad. For three years now the Law on Academic Autonomy has been effective. All data pertaining to the numbers of students, departments, fields of study, researchers and teaching staff and their movements can be obtained from the information centres in each institution.

The third sector on "other systems" collects data on: education in the periodical press; comparative statistics based on Unesco criteria; financing and staffing policies; international co-operation and activities; sociological and other sampling studies; computer mail.

All teachers have access to this data through regular information bulletins or directly for a minimum fee.

1 The term "secondary education" in this context covers also primary education.

II. Finance and budgets

Secondary education expenditure is mainly financed from the state budget. Local self-government bodies (municipalities) take part in its financing. Public schools are directly financed by the state, whereas the municipal schools are funded by local self-government bodies. The amount of support for secondary education is determined by annually-adjusted norms for the upkeep of students differentiated by educational level and type of school. The financing mechanism for secondary education must indeed allow for flexibility as it must respond to the real financial needs of the school.

The efforts of the state aimed at reforming secondary education in order to make it correspond to European standards concentrate on the provision of extra financial resources for international programmes and earmarked budgets for relevant foundations and funds.

Money for upkeep and salaries is supplied from the budgets of the self-governing bodies and from that of the Ministry of Science and Education and other ministries and departments, which distribute them between the schools. Each school eventually determines its own budget. The remuneration of teachers comes from municipal budgets in municipal schools and from the state budget in public schools. The budget of each school is determined by the respective administrative body; for municipal schools by the municipality, for public schools by the ministry. Besides the funds for staff salaries and upkeep, the state budget also allocates money for capital investment and to teachers undertaking further qualifications in secondary education.

Schools can procure their own revenues from the sale of manufactured products and services in the course of the programme, from leased property, from income engendered by extra pedagogical services (instruction in foreign languages, mathematics, drawing, etc., outside the regular curricula), etc. Revenues from these and other activities are, as yet, small, both as an absolute sum and as a proportion of budget allocations. Revenues earned by schools are used for improvements in the upkeep and for the development of facilities. Money from sponsorships, donations, funds and foundations in Bulgaria and abroad are at present insignificant.

Boarding schools for children and adolescents (orphans) and special schools receive scholarships, donations, funds and gifts in kind (food, clothes, shoes, etc.).

There is a trend towards the greater financial autonomy of schools that manifests itself mainly in the liberty to freely dispose of their budget allocations and of their self-procured revenues.

Legislation on secondary education carries a obligation for the state to ensure money for the material upkeep of each student of compulsory school age (under 16) in the newly opened private schools. Salaries and social insurance are to be paid by the schools themselves. Such upkeep shall not be inferior to the material upkeep per student in the respective public or municipal schools. It also provides for tax alleviations for private schools during a period of three years after their opening, with a view to helping these schools in their infancy and of making society shoulder the cost of their student upkeep. Students in private schools pay fees whose level is set by the schools.

In 1991, 57% of the funds allocated to education in the state budget and the budgets of the local self-governing bodies was spent on secondary education. In the same year 2 064 leva (100 leva = £1 approximately) per student was spent in comprehensive (general) secondary schools and 3 062 leva per student in vocational schools.

In recent years the costs of secondary education were as follows:

	1989	1990	1991	1992
Education cost as a percentage of GDP	2.6	3.2	3.0	3.1
– for secondary education	1.6	1.9	1.8	1.9
Education cost as a percentage of national income	6.3	6.6	6.8	–
– for secondary education (see footnote p. 13)	3.4	3.4	3.5	–

The above date show that the relative share of secondary education in the overall educational budget has not increased and has even slightly decreased. The reason for this can be explained by economic factors, which are not the subject of this report. The consequences, however, reflect negatively on the way in which financial support for schools is determined. Here lies also the reason for seeking to establish normatively regulated conditions for ensuring and spending extra budgetary funds.

III. School and society

Directing public effort towards the development of a market-oriented economy poses a number of questions for the education system. A diploma for having completed secondary education no longer guarantees suitable employment. Since the mid-1980s, the number of employed has been steadily decreasing and unemployment can be expected to attain its maximum level at the outset of the process of privatisation, with economic restructuring starting at the same time.

Questions are prompted by the fact that the economy is in crisis and that the immediate prospects for its recovery are not very encouraging. Expansion of secondary enrolments will eventually not be warranted by an increased demand for secondary graduates. On the other hand, the unfavourable demographic development represents another limitation to the expansion of secondary education.

The beginning of the 1950s coincided with attempts to create new principles for the relation between the school and public policy-making in the wake of the growing democratisation of society and the growing decentralisation and autonomy of local communities. It should be noted that these processes unfolded rather chaotically and that there is still no consistent policy for the development of this interaction.

In the 1980s, the relationship between the school and the world of work was further complicated by attempts to bring together two historically differentiated educational branches: general comprehensive and vocational education. The vocational training complexes created for the purpose proved a most ineffective form of secondary education. They were supposed to provide vocational training to students of the unified secondary polytechnic schools (secondary schools) in their last six months of schooling. Most of the graduates of these schools failed to make use of the acquired qualification, either because they enrolled in higher education, or because they could not compete with their colleagues who had graduated from the secondary technical and vocational technical schools. A new concept for vocational education is now in the making with the help of specialists from the World Bank.

In the framework of economic restructuring, the Ministry of Science and Education was led to authorise the various types of vocational schools to organise fee-paying courses and classes for requalification, carried out on a contractual basis with firms, enterprises or private persons. The duration of training, the curricula, and the type of certificates awarded vary according to the needs of applicants.

Vocational schools may on a contractual basis organise vocational training for people with elementary, basic or secondary education, as well as courses for requalification and the upgrading of qualifications with juridical or natural persons. Instruction is carried out at the vocational schools by its staff.

The plans and curricula for upgrading qualifications and for requalification are approved by the pedagogical council of the school and authorised by its principal. After sitting for examinations the students receive a certificate of professional qualification, upgrading of qualification or requalification, which can only be issued by the school if there is no other legally competent body.

Vocational schools can also organise examinations for vocational qualifications and the certification of persons who have been trained elsewhere.

Instruction, examinations and the issuing of certificates are subject to payment under the Tariffs for Pedagogical Services. Assets and liabilities are shouldered by the educational establishment.

The relative proportion of the two main streams of students at Bulgarian secondary schools – general comprehensive and vocational – is in favour of the latter. The insufficiently clarified economic priorities, however, justify caution in the creation of new vocational schools. Many of them are closely related to economic activity in the region, and obviously in those regions that are being newly developed it would be difficult for some of those vocationally qualified to find a place on the labour-market. The existing economic structure is in some regions rather monomorphic. Vocational schools will lose their importance when local enterprises, as a result of economic restructuring, no longer need qualified staff with such qualifications.

The development of an educational system for adults capable of reacting to market needs would help young people to enter active life more successfully. It would provide an alternative to the only options that are now often open to them, namely, to join the ranks of the unemployed or to leave the country.

The law on education in Bulgaria states the following: "Every citizen is entitled to education in a school of his choice and with a type of instruction that corresponds to his personal preferences and capacities".

Other forms of education

In additional to daytime classes, education and instruction are also offered in the following forms:

– evening instruction: requires personal attendance and is organised at a time to suit students. It is attended by people who hold a job and who have for one reason or another abandoned education.

– extramural instruction: with part-time attendance, combines daytime classes with self-instruction. Students have to obtain a leave of absence from work for a certain time.

– correspondence instruction: no attendance required. Students obtain the necessary teaching material by correspondence, have tasks regularly set for them and their achievement is subject to control. At the end of the course they sit for the legally required final examinations.

– self-instruction: requiring no attendance. Students study entirely on their own. Schools organise regular consultations and examinations for each grade as well as final examinations.

– educational institutions for adults are also set up as evening schools and as schools with more "shift" instruction, as well as evening classes at the general comprehensive and vocational schools. These programmes work with adapted educational plans and curricula, whereas the minimum requirements and the organisation of the courses are in conformity with the age-specific requirements.

Education in these programmes is free of charge when organised by public or municipal schools.

– units are set up within vocational schools for requalification or the upgrading of the professional qualification of adults. This form of education is subject to the payment of fees by students themselves or by sponsors. Programmes of the new "civic education" cycle deal, for instance, with intercultural education, human rights education, ecological education and health issues. In spite of the indisputable significance of programmes of this kind, however, relevant initiatives of the local education authorities and of the central administrations concerned are still very rare. New legislative texts, however, make room for opportunities for local authorities and individual schools themselves to decide not only what subjects to introduce, but also how to shape their relations with the local community.

An encouraging development is the organisation of programmes for intercultural education in certain schools in ethnically mixed regions, as well as the setting up of the first human rights commissions for solving conflicts in

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schools in these regions. These commissions are also important because, for the first time, students, teachers and parents are equally represented in the commissions, and thus a new model of a school–community relationship is created.

Under the Regulations for the Application of the Law for Public Education, representatives of parents, the public and students sit on school councils. They thus participate directly in determining the school's priorities. However, attempts at the regional and national level to set up teachers' associations with standing participation in management, able to put pressure on the legislative and executive authorities, have failed.

The problem of the role of out-of-school sports activities remains unsolved. They were fully state-controlled, but were aimed at supporting élite sports-persons and clubs. After their disappearance – and with them the strong traditions of school sport – there is, as yet, no sign of a revival of school sport. Neither is there any proposed plan for adequate financial support for such school sports or joint school–local community sports programmes.

IV. Administration and organisation of the education system and of educational establishments

The principal, the pedagogical council and the school council are responsible for the administration of the school. The pedagogical council and the school council are collective bodies.

The pedagogical council is a specialised professional body of school administration. It comprises all pedagogical specialists (that is all teachers). Its powers are:

- the adoption of a school's internal regulations;
- the adoption of a plan of studies, in compliance with the requirements of the state plan;
- the selection of types of education and the determination of the order in which they are to be fulfilled.

The Law for Public Education and the Regulations for its Application provide for:

- general compulsory instruction;
- optional instruction: for pupils of elementary, pre-secondary and secondary schools (four hours a week in general comprehensive and two hours in vocational schools). This is a non-compulsory type of education;
- compulsory-elective or profile-oriented instruction: for students at the secondary school level, two hours in grade 9, five in grade 10, eleven in grade 11, and seventeen in grade 12. Students must choose at lease two subjects for compulsory-elective instruction and at least three for profile-oriented instruction;
- the conditions for student admission:
  - without competition to all elementary and pre-secondary schools as well as to some secondary schools;
  - after a competition organised and carried out by the respective school, for those general and vocational secondary schools that are willing to select their students. Those who successfully pass the entrance exam

can be enrolled only at the school where they sat the examination. This type of admission requires a completed pre-secondary course (grade 8);

- after a nationwide competition organised by the ministry and carried out by its services on a regional basis in the twenty-eight regions. The ministry determines the type of entrance tests for admission to the comprehensive profile-oriented or vocational schools. Candidates must have completed the grade 7 or 8. Examinations may be carried out in Bulgarian language and literature, foreign languages, mathematics, physics, chemistry, biology, geography and figurative arts. Students who have passed the examination can enrol in the school of their preference.

- adoption of the curriculum;
- discussion and decision-making on examination results;
- adoption of individual study plans and curricula;
- proposals for rewarding and disciplining students and teachers;
- adoption of programmes for extracurricular and other out of school activities;
- the setting of rules for reasonable absence from classes.

The decisions of the pedagogical council are mandatory for the school and can only be revoked by a majority decision of the council itself or by the Minister of Science and Education.

The school council, a consultative body, comprises representatives of teachers, parents, the public and pupils. It discusses reports, projects, juridical proposals and other material pertaining to school activities placed before the competent authorities. Teachers' representatives do not constitute more than one-third of its members.

In compliance with education levels the following educational institutions are set up:

- elementary schools;
- pre-secondary schools;
- basic schools (elementary, pre-secondary);
- secondary schools – comprehensive-general (non-profile-orientated or profile-oriented) and vocational.

The levels and types of education are as follows:

– elementary education (first level): begins at the age of 6 or 7 years and continues for four years.

During this period, students are systematically taught to read and write and are acquainted with the basics of mathematics, natural and social sciences, and the arts, by following, in the main, the principle of integration. Particular attention is paid to physical development, aesthetical culture and the acquisition of working habits. In principle, education during this period is carried out by a single teacher and only part of it (the arts and physical culture) may be handled by specialists. The student passes onto the next level after successful completion of the last (fourth) grade, and after obtaining a certificate of elementary education featuring their annual mark in grade 4.

– basic education (second level) lasting four years after elementary education.

During this period the student is systematically taught his native language, mathematics, natural and social sciences and the arts, and begins to study a foreign language. He is instructed by different teachers in the different subjects.

Students who successfully complete the course receive a certificate for basic education, which enables them to continue their education at a higher level or to obtain vocational qualifications in the vocational or crafts schools. The certificate mentions the annual mark obtained in the subjects taught in grade 8 and the results from optional instruction in each grade.

Students above the age of 13, who have completed six years of education, can be admitted to the vocational and crafts schools, where they complete both their basic education and obtain professional qualifications for a longer period (two or three years depending on the finishing grade). In addition, these students receive a professional qualification certificate issued by the school where they obtained their qualifications, which enables them to exercise their respective professions.

– secondary education (third level) lasts three to five years after the completion of basic education.

All students who have finished basic education have access to secondary education.

The Ministry of Science and Education intends to extend the minimum duration of secondary education to twelve years, thus bringing Bulgarian secondary education more into line with the usual European requirements.

A diploma for secondary education is issued after the successful completion of the last secondary education grade and successful passing of the written final examination, which varies according to the type of school. Exemption from final examinations is not allowed.

The number of students in the different varieties of secondary education (see below) varies from year to year. Proportional enrolments in the three types are shown in the appendix.

The examination subjects are determined by the Ministry of Science and Education and are known by the students at the time of their enrolment in secondary education. The ministry also determines the examination procedure and the examination themes, which are the same for the whole country. The examination proceedings in schools are supervised by the ministry, while results in each subject are inspected and evaluated by school commissions. These commissions are appointed by the principal and comprise certified teachers specialised in the respective disciplines.

The diploma for secondary education enables students to continue their education at a higher level and to choose their higher education without restriction. Those who decide not to continue (at their own discretion or due to failure in the final exams) may avail themselves of the opportunity to follow professional education in a vocational school during one or two years in order to obtain the respective certificate.

Students who have completed secondary education but have not passed the final examination are entitled to a document that allows them to exercise a profession requiring secondary education, but have no right to continue their education at the higher level.

Secondary education comes in three varieties:

– comprehensive (general). It comprises instruction at the minimum level with a right to two, three or four optional subjects that are taught at a higher level. Enrolment requires a certificate of completed basic education.

– profile-oriented. Students are instructed at a higher level in a specified field (profile) – in natural sciences, mathematics, humanities, languages, the arts and culture, sports – and at the minimum level in other subjects. Admission (by competition) is on special requirements and the completed profile features on the final certificate.

Instruction in the above varieties is organised within the framework of the number of teaching hours specified in the plans for the secondary school level.

Students trained according to the first version attend the hours for compulsory elective instruction and choose subjects to which these hours are added in order to comply with the rules for instruction at a higher level. They are free to choose different subjects every year.

For students in the second variety, the hours of compulsory-elective instruction already feature in the study plan that they accepted when enroling in this course. If they wish to change their profile, they must pass examinations in the subjects of the new profile under conditions set by the school administration.

– vocational. It ensures comprehensive instruction in the national "core curriculum" for this level and also vocational training for employment requiring secondary level education. Upon successful completion, students receive a diploma of secondary education and a professional qualification certificate.

Vocational education can be attended:

– after completing the elementary course;

– simultaneously with, or after completing, the basic or secondary education course. Vocational qualifications can, thus, be obtained for 250 professions.

Vocational training is mostly carried out in specialised educational establishments. Both theoretically and practically, instruction follows a centrally prescribed school plan. The ratio of general to vocational education in vocational schools is 1:1,6. Vocational schools are specialised in different sectors of economic activity: mechanical engineering, power generation, construction, agriculture, light industry, economics, services, etc. Besides a diploma for the respective education level, graduates receive a professional qualification enabling them to work as technicians, specialists or qualified workers. They are entitled to continue education at the higher level in a freely chosen field.

There is a legally guaranteed opportunity for students who have completed the respective education level to receive additional professional training in vocational schools. In these cases the schools provide only vocational training and issue the respective certificate.

A network of vocational schools is being built: technical schools, secondary vocational-technical schools providing secondary education and vocational-technical schools providing education below the secondary level:

– technical schools train highly qualified labour in secondary special education (technical, economic, agricultural, etc.). They ensure the necessary general, general-technical and special training. Graduates are qualified as technicians, economists, etc. Enroling students must have finished basic education

and are graded either on the basis of their entrance examination score or the score in their school certificate.

In compliance with the strong trend towards foreign language education of the last four to five years, these schools also enrol students (after they have completed grade 7) for intensive foreign language instruction.

– secondary vocational-technical schools train qualified workers at the secondary education level. They provide general, general-technical and vocational instruction and that leads to workers being qualified in their respective profession. Enroling students must have completed basic education and are graded by merit.

– vocational-technical schools train qualified workers for professions that do not require a completed secondary education. These schools do not offer full secondary education. Two options are available:

- students over 16 who have not completed their basic education may simultaneously acquire a professional qualification and complete their basic instruction. So far enrolment has been insignificant owing to the lack of interest shown by students and parents;
- students who have completed their basic education but who do not continue in secondary education can obtain professional qualifications.

Vocational education opens the way both to practical work and to higher education. Owing to this double option, it is preferred by students and parents to comprehensive-general education.

The type of professional qualifications offered in vocational training closely resembles those offered in other countries.

Vocational schools provide evening or extramural classes to all citizens over 18 who so desire. Most of them are skilled workers who have failed to complete the respective education level.

Vocational education reform provides for:

– the transformation of former technical, secondary vocational-technical and vocational-technical schools into vocational secondary schools and vocational craft schools;

– determination of the length of instruction for each profession and for each form and type of training. The duration of courses thus established will also be obligatory for out-of-school forms of vocational education;

– the adaptation of the content of instruction for each subject and each profession to be taught in schools that should begin operating in the 1993/94

academic year in response to the need to provide foreign language education and economic and computer training.

The decisions taken above are made within the framework of the Law for Public Education. Their implementation has started on a preliminary level.

Special education

Special schools are a particular type of educational establishment providing general comprehensive or vocational secondary education, created for students who need special care, help and protection to be provided by the state and society. They are:

– schools for students with chronic medical conditions: medical rehabilitation, hospital and sanatorial schools.

Medical rehabilitation schools are specialised comprehensive-general boarding schools or vocational boarding schools for the training and rehabilitation of pupils suffering from disorders of the respiratory system (tuberculosis, non-specific and allergic conditions); cardiovascular and collagen ailments; intestinal, liver and kidney conditions; endocrinal complaints; psychic disorders; spine deformities and impairments of the locomotor apparatus; and non-major forms of cerebral paralysis.

The selection and admission of pupils to these schools are carried out in compliance with the instructions of the Minister of Health Care and the Minister of Science and Education. Training and therapy follow the state education requirements for the instruction of children with chronic ailments. The sanatorial and hospital schools and classes are set up with the sanatoria and hospitals treating children and adolescents subject to compulsory education. These schools are basic comprehensive schools in which instruction takes place under a special regime but while at the same time observing state education requirements.

– schools for children with lasting disorders: schools for mentally retarded children, for children with speech deficiencies, impaired hearing, impaired sight, concurrent afflictions.

Schools for children with lasting disorders organise instruction and rehabilitation of children that aims at the correction of and compensation for the existing disorders, and the stimulation of the student's overall development. Admission is based on a decision taken by a medical and pedagogical commission whose functions and composition are defined in the relevant Instructions of the Minister of Health Care and the Minister of Science and Education. After the commission has given its go-ahead, students with corrected or

sufficiently compensated for disorders may be given training in normal schools under a less stringent regime. Treatment for disorders is also offered in independent speech therapy facilities, and in centres and consulting facilities for the rehabilitation of hearing, speech and sight. They provide a service both for pupils from special and regular schools. With the permission of the Minister of Science and Education, classes or groups for children with lasting disorders could start operating in comprehensive or vocational schools.

In schools for children with mental deficiencies, the instruction is organised until grade 8, while children with impaired sight or hearing may finish secondary general or vocational education in compliance with state education requirements.

Students who have completed the highest grade at a school for mentally deficient children are entitled to training in vocational crafts schools in professions specified by the Minister of Health, or social education and vocational establishments, but they have no right to continue their education at the higher level.

Graduates of schools for children with impaired sight or hearing, after successfully passing their final examinations, enjoy the same rights as graduates of secondary education.

– schools for students with specific educational needs: boarding schools for children and adolescents; correctional boarding schools; socio-pedagogical boarding schools.

Boarding schools for children and adolescents look after, instruct and bring up students who have no family or whose parents have been deprived of their parental rights. These boarding schools provide basic and comprehensive education and organise their activities in conformity with state requirements for the education of children with specific educational needs.

The correctional boarding schools are intended for students placed there under the Act on the Combat against Antisocial Behaviour of Juvenile Delinquents. Suggestions, verdicts, definitions and decrees for placing students in these schools must be forwarded by the respective competent body to the Ministry of Science and Education by 30 July.

Students are placed by a commission of the Ministry of Science and Education. Posting takes place until 20 August and admission until 5 September. In exceptional cases students can also be admitted in the course of the school year. Students stay in correctional boarding schools for a maximum of three years, except when they are willing to stay longer and have the approval of the pedagogical council.

A personal file is kept on each student. The file is confidential and is disclosed only to authorised persons. A certificate of the educational level attained and the grade or professional qualification features only the type of school and its location. Only the Prosecutor's Office is entitled to exercise legal control over the activities of the correctional boarding schools.

The socio-pedagogical boarding schools are basic schools for students who have no suitable living conditions at home, are deprived of parental care and control, and who tend to commit antisocial acts. Children are placed in a socio-pedagogical boarding school following a proposal from the competent authorities. Admission is effected by a commission appointed by the school principal.

This type of school functions throughout the year and students can only go on leave at the weekends or during holidays with the principal's permission and provided suitable reception conditions exist.

Schools run in conjunction with places of detainment are organised under the respective laws and are regulated by a special statute.

V. Education and culture

One of the main purposes of education in Bulgaria's school legislation is the mastering of universal and national culture. Both the requirements pertaining to the content of education and the existence of a network of specialised schools in the domain of art and culture respond to this desire.

Literature, fine art and music are compulsory subjects in the comprehensive-general schools. Curricula for these subjects feature both the achievements of world culture and national accomplishments. Secondary school students may study such optional subjects as aesthetics, history of civilisations and culture, etc., in order to systemise and upgrade their knowledge. A possibility has been made to organise special classes in the field of fine art, music, theatre, dance and knowledge of culture, etc. On the other hand, a network of specialised schools in art and culture has been created: for music, choreography, fine art, ancient languages and cultures. Some of them are specialised in the field of local crafts and applied arts or folk music.

Art, creativity and cultural expression have a long tradition in Bulgarian schools. They are usually supported by national and local extra-school institutions: art schools, literature and art clubs for children and adolescents, school ensembles, etc. Local and national contests are organised and the participation of Bulgarian students in international arts festivals and contests is ensured.

VI. Study Plans

A study plan is divided into three sections:

- section A deals with the weekly number of compulsory teaching hours. It also ensures that the respective educational level is attained. No subjects can be taken out of section A and the number of teaching hours cannot be reduced. It is obligatory for all comprehensive-general and vocational schools.
- section B defines:
  - the compulsory elective instruction in non-profile-oriented schools and classes. The academic hours within this section are distributed between the subjects of study in section A for the respective grade. Instruction in each subject should not exceed one hour a week in grade 9, two hours in grade 10, three hours in grade 11, and four hours in grade 12. Academic hours within section B are fully distributed. Training is organised in groups, observing the norm for the standard minimum number of students per group. The annual score is derived from the results in the generally compulsory and compulsory-elective subjects when they coincide.
  - profile-oriented instruction in profile-oriented schools or single profile-oriented classes within the framework of a non-profile-oriented school, which is organised by the pedagogical council of the school, whilst observing the following requirements.

  Each specialised profile is defined by at least three subjects of study from section A, with one of them as the major profile-specifying subject.

  The name of the profile that features on the diploma for completed secondary education is determined by the major profile-specifying subject.

  All academic hours from section B are added to the compulsory hours of profile-specifying subjects and each profile-specifying subject should be taught for at least four hours a week. Thus, in profile-oriented training, students have, on a weekly basis, more academic hours than in other types of school.

– section C determines the optional instruction of students, both on subjects in section A and on subjects outside this section, depending on the student's wishes and the capacity of the school. This instruction is not included within the compulsory school hours and is carried out in groups observing the norm for the minimum number of students per groups. The results are entered in a special section of the certificate for a completed education level and do not influence the general score.

In the 1992/93 academic year, a new study plan was introduced for grades 1 to 4, 5 and 9 of secondary comprehensive schools, as well as for the preparatory grades and grade 7 of the specialised schools providing for profile-oriented training if the students are in agreement and the school has the necessary capacity.

The study plan for non-profile-oriented training exists in two versions:

– non-profile-oriented training with compulsory-elective instruction only in the last grade of secondary schools;

– non-profile-oriented training with compulsory-elective instruction in two or more subjects, which can be changed by the student at the beginning of each academic year.

The second version is a plan of study for profile-oriented training under which three subjects in one scientific domain or belonging to the same thematic field are taught for at least four hours a week.

The type of study plan is selected by the school administration. It is then discussed and adopted by the school council and brought to the knowledge of students and parents. The choice of profile-oriented instruction or system of compulsory-elective instruction is made by students or their parents (guardians). When they are enrolled in the school, students specify the subjects they wish to study within the system of compulsory-elective or optional instruction, or the profile they eventually would like to join. The subjects in compulsory-elective or in optional instruction can be changed by the students at the beginning of each academic year. A change of profile is also made at the beginning of the academic year after successfully passing an examination. Students can also withdraw from profile-education training and switch over without passing examinations to another educational version.

Each profile can be differentiated by the number of academic hours dedicated to associated subjects or by the choice of an auxiliary subject. At present a foreign language subject is one of the more important auxiliary subjects. In grade 5, students choose a foreign language according to their

wishes and the capacity of the school. They can make their choice from the following: English, Italian, German, Russian, French.

In grade 7, students choose a second foreign language from the above-mentioned group. In the higher secondary education course other languages are available within the framework of compulsory-elective or optional instruction.

In cases when students are studying their mother tongue, as well as Bulgarian, the taking of a second foreign language is optional. Students can also change foreign languages at the beginning of grade 9.

Vocational education follows study plans set by the state, and curricula featuring the comprehensive and special subjects of study. Subjects are specified as compulsory, compulsory-elective and optional. The ratio of comprehensive to vocational training is 1:4,3.

Education plans for vocational schools are strictly specific. They feature the number of individual compulsory academic hours in comprehensive education, but each vocation has a plan of study.

VII. Evaluation

The criteria for passing into higher secondary education are listed, in Section IV, for each education level.

The knowledge and skills of students are tested by oral, written and practical examinations. Assessment is both continuous and periodic. Continuous assessment is carried out by teachers, and periodic assessment by teachers and state bodies responsible for the management of education. The evaluation of knowledge and skills follows the six-point system of grading operating in the country, irrespective of the chosen form of assessment. Results are evaluated at the end of each school term, school year.

A certificate for having completed grade 1 contains the annual general score. The certificate for grades 2 and 3 contains the annual results of the subjects taught in the curriculum. The certificate for completed elementary education features the annual results of the subjects taught in the curricula of grade 4.

In all other grades, school books, class journals, personal files and diplomas for a completed level of education feature end of term and end of year results, as well as the mark for a completed level of education according to the requirements of the study plan. Cases in which the end-of-term mark is acknowledged as an end-of-year mark and the annual mark is entered in the diploma for a completed education level are regulated by the study plan.

The accomplishments of students in subjects taught in the artistic and aesthetic cycle, physical culture, practical skills, technical skills and technology are not marked according to a numbered scale. The regular participation of students in the process of instruction is merely marked with "passed". Results in these subjects are only given marks when the specialised profile of the school or the class calls for it, or if it was a compulsory-elective or optional subject.

Results of optional instruction figure on the diploma for a completed education level but do not influence the general score.

After successfully finishing grade 4, the student receives a certificate for having completed elementary education. He need not sit any exams. After

successfully finishing grade 8 and passing the exams outlined in the study plan (this provision is not in practice yet), the student receives a diploma for completed basic education. Students complete their secondary education after successfully finishing the last grade and passing the final examinations outlined in the study plan. They receive a diploma for completed secondary education, which enables them to apply for higher education.

Students may sit supplementary examinations in order to improve their marks, but only for one examination per subject and for no more than three subjects in each education level. These examinations are held after the completion of the last year in the respective education level. Students are considered to have finished their grade if in all compulsory subjects their annual score is no less than "satisfactory (3)". Students who have "poor (2)" marks in four or more compulsory subjects or have not passed their "second-chance" examinations, repeat the grade. A "successfully" passed examination means that the student has scored at least "satisfactory (3)".

Control activities within the system of secondary education are organised, executed and headed by the Chief State Inspectorate Office together with the ministry (by inspections in the field, control of documents and samples). The inspectorate's activities follow, in the main, two lines:

- the control of results in different subjects and the level of knowledge and skills mastered by students;

- the control of the organisation and management of the educational process.

The inspectors of the Chief State Inspectorate Office entrusted with the control of the two main activities are experts on the problems of instruction in different school subjects and experts in the administration of education. The first have pedagogical functions, whereas the second monitor the organisation of training conditions to see that it complies with legal documents and institutional guidelines.

Some of their functions are:

- to supervise compliance with state education requirements regarding knowledge and skills, evaluation, extra-class and extra-school activities, school books and manuals, the documentation of education, and scientific, information, pedagogical and psychological services pertaining to the respective subject of study;

- to control and co-ordinate the work of experts in the different regional inspectorates of the Ministry and Science and Education;

- to evaluate the results of training; the effectiveness of teachers' work and

their level of qualifications, the activities of the regional inspectorate experts in the various subjects of study and the level of their training;

– to suggest changes in the method and content of instruction in different subjects;

– to assist the Ministry of Science and Education in decision-making concerning instruction in various subjects.

The twenty-eight regional inspectorates are branch offices of the state inspectorate. Regional experts in subjects of study and the experts in the organisation and management of education are employed by these inspectorates.

The aims of control activities are: the work of teachers, and of auxiliary and non-pedagogical staff in kindergartens; students' activities and accomplishments; the instruction carried out by teachers; the servicing of schools, extra-school establishments and kindergartens as regards matters concerning personnel, material and technical considerations, organisation and pedagogy, information and jurisdiction; the work of principals and deputy principals of schools, extra-school establishments and kindergartens; the structure and affectiveness of regional networks of schools, extra-school establishments and kindergartens.

The main ways of exercising control are:

– a study of documentation registering the accomplishments of students, the pedagogical and instruction work of teachers, the work of tutors, the administrative work of principals and deputy principals, and the control work of experts;

– tests, cases, samples and other means for registration and the evaluation of the accomplishments of students, the pedagogical and instruction work carried out by teachers, the administrative work of principals and deputy principals, the organisation and material provisions of schools, and the co-ordination and work of experts;

– expert studies on the territorial unit and other regional education structures, on instruction in different subjects and lines of organisation and methodological documentation, on the qualifications held by teachers, tutors, principals and experts, and on normative documents.

At present, the results of control activities do not influence the remuneration of teachers, which reduces the effect of inspection and does not ensure any direct material incentive or sanctioning of the inspected teachers. The present consequences are:

– a proposal for punishment due to lapses in work and the non-observance of vocational duties according to the Labour Code;

– a motion for promotion or moral incentive, and opportunities for a higher qualification class under the respective regulations of the Ministry of Science and Education.

VIII. School staff

The school principal is appointed by the Minister of Science and Education after a competition. He is directly subordinated to the minister. He reports on his activities to the pedagogical council, the school council and the minister.

The principal represents the school as a juridical person and for this purpose:

- exercises internal control in compliance with his legally authorised rights;
- manages the budgetary and extra-budgetary income of the school;
- signs contracts with juridical and natural persons concerning the school's activities;
- appoints teachers and non-pedagogical staff;
- awards and reprimands teachers and students under existing legal regulations;
- controls the correct keeping of school documentation;
- chairs the pedagogical council and the school council, and ensures the implementation of their decisions.

The teachers are, as said, appointed by the school principal, who is their official employer.

The occupation of a teacher's post calls for higher or semi-higher education and a teacher's certificate. A teacher's certificate is defined by the qualification "teacher" written in the diploma for completed education or in the diploma for requalification. The requirements for the occupation of a teacher's post are determined in an instruction of the Minister of Science and Education.

Teachers of secondary education are trained within the system of higher education. Teachers in comprehensive subjects are trained in nineteen pedagogical and sixteen university disciplines at the universities and higher pedagogical institutes, as well as in ten disciplines in the semi-higher teachers' institutes. This training is carried out in three universities, two higher pedagogical institutes and ten semi-higher teachers' institutes. Teachers of vocational educa-

tion are trained in all higher technical, economic, agricultural and medical institutes and in two semi-higher institutes for teachers in practical activities. There is a specialised unit, affiliated with the Technical University in Sofia in the town of Silven, which trains engineer-pedagogues in four school subjects. Higher education establishments regularly organise requalification courses for teachers in new subjects, necessitated by the changes in study plans.

Semi-higher schools are educational units for the training of specialists with semi-higher education within the system of higher education. Their training course lasts three years. The organisation of training is similar to that in higher schools with which they are related. The contents of education are chosen so as to ensure a relatively complete training for work in specified posts in health care, economics, education, culture, tourism, communications, etc. Training has a clear vocational orientation.

Training in semi-higher schools enables their graduates to teach in all kinds of schools at all levels, but at the time of appointment priority is given to teachers with higher education.

The upgrading of teachers' vocational qualifications is carried out in three specialised institutes in the Universities of Sofia, Stara Zagora and Varna, as well as at the specialised units of other universities and pedagogical institutes. The teachers' right to upgrade their qualifications in these units is regulated by law and funded by the ministry in cases when new state education requirements are introduced or existing ones changed. The same is true when owing to objective reasons a requalification is required by a change of post or the character of work. In all other cases, training is paid for by the interested person or by a sponsor, educational department, municipality, company or other economic organisation. Opportunities for upgrading qualifications by self-study are being expanded. This is encouraged by extra remuneration for passing examinations.

Legal regulation of the vocational level and title of teachers is forthcoming. It will be closely linked to the level of their professional qualifications.

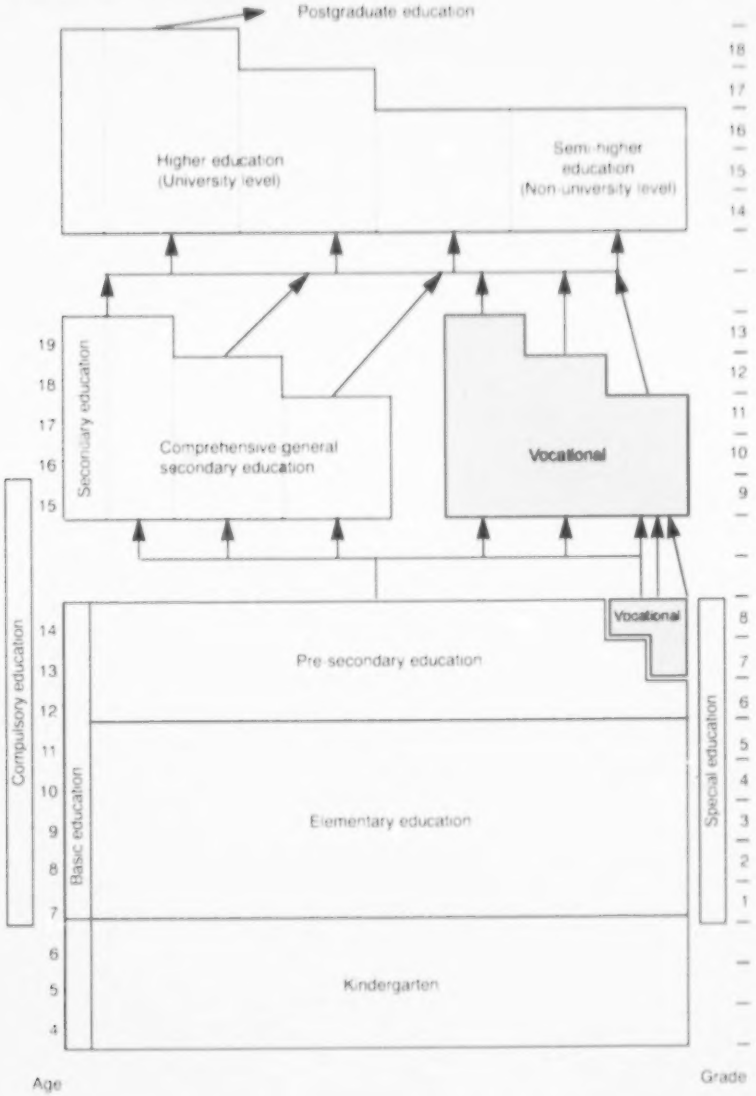
IX. European dimensions of secondary education

The democratisation of society, and in particular that of the educational system, has opened up greater possibilities for Bulgaria to participate in international projects and programmes, and for more exchanges and mobility. As a country outside the European Union, Bulgaria actively participates in the TEMPUS programme on higher education, but still cannot avail itself of the opportunities of kindred programmes in secondary education. In 1993, a mechanism was created to enable Bulgarian nationals to participate in the Council of Europe's In Service Training Scheme for Teachers. Bulgaria also joined the network of school exchanges and links within the Council of Europe. However, these exchanges have so far been carried out mainly within the framework of direct bilateral contacts between secondary schools or contacts between twin towns. As an element of the European dimension of secondary education, the studying of foreign languages is taken very seriously. Among them, English is the leading language, followed by French and German.

Bulgaria has special "bilingual" (language) secondary schools in which the major subjects are taught in the respective foreign language. There are English, German, French, Spanish, Italian and Russian secondary schools, and separate classes in Chinese, Japanese, Portuguese, Czech, Polish, Serbo-Croat and Greek. Bulgarian representatives also participate in Council of Europe seminars on history and geography teaching in the sub-projects of the project "A secondary education for Europe". Serious efforts are under way for the general introduction of human rights teaching based on a special manual developed by Unesco.

Appendix

The system of education

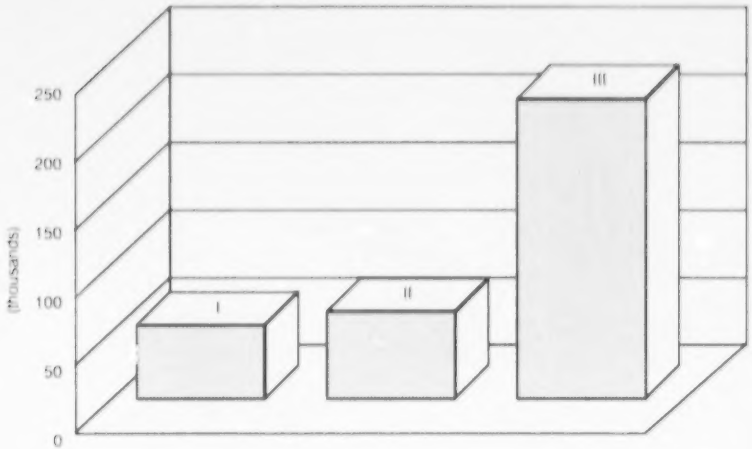


Timetables (lessons per week)

Subjects	Education levels												
	Elementary				Pre-secondary				Secondary				
	Grades												
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13
A. Compulsory subjects													
Bulgarian language & literature	8	8	8	8	5	5	5	5	3	3	3	2	2
Foreign language	–	–	–	–	4	4	4	4	4	4	4	4	4
Mathematics	4	4	4	4	5	4	4	4	4	3	3	2	2
Informatics	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	2	2	–
Natural geography & history	0.5	2	2	2	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–
History	–	–	–	–	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	–	–
Philosophy	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	2	2	2	2	–
Natural sciences	–	–	0.5	0.5	2	2	2	–	–	–	–	–	–
Physics & astronomy	–	–	–	–	–	–	2	2	2	2	2	–	–
Chemistry	–	–	–	–	–	–	2	2	2	2	–	–	–
Biology	–	–	–	–	–	2	2	2	2	2	–	–	–
Geography	–	–	–	–	–	2	2	2	2	2	–	–	–
Fine art	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	1	–	–	–	–
Music	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	1	–	–	–	–

Subjects	Education levels												
	Elementary				Pre-secondary				Secondary				
	Grades												
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13
Practical skills	1	1	2	2	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–
Technical skills	–	–	–	–	2	2	1	1	–	–	–	–	–
Technology	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	2	2	–	–	–
Physical culture (sports)	4/3	3	3	3	3	3	2	2	2	2	3	3	3
Total A	22	22	24/25	25	27	30	30	30	29	26	20	15	11
B. Compulsory-elective subjects									2	5	11	17	21
Total A + B	22	22	24/25	25	27	30	30	30	31	31	31	32	32
C. Optional instruction	3	4	4	4	4	4	4	4	4	4	4	4	4
Total A + B + C	25	26	28/29	29	31	34	34	34	35	35	35	36	36
Number of school weeks	31	32	32	32	34	34	34	31	36	36	31/36	31/36	31

Relative number of secondary schools pupils



I Comprehensive secondary schools
II Profile-oriented secondary schools
III Vocational secondary schools

The school year in the comprehensive-general school

First term: 15 September-1 February

Second term: Grades 2-4: 4 February-31 May
Grades 5-7: 4 February-15 June
Grades 9-11: 4 February-30 June

Holidays

Christmas	24 December-6 January
End of term	2 February-3 February
Spring	1 April-10 April

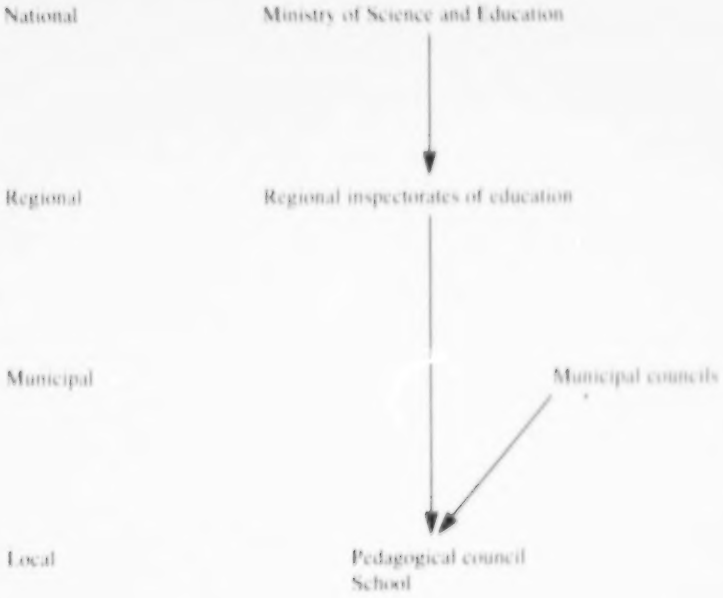
For grade 1: 11 November-13 November

The school week lasts 5 days.

Student numbers

Number of students	1970	1975	1980	1985	1990	1991	1992
Secondary education (general)	100 949	116 586	97 089	163 417	152 683	150 297	148 185
Vocational secondary schools	283 203	286 995	248 775	211 148	241 498	236 313	224 246
Graduates from secondary education	93 954	118 041	97 791	98 184	97 138	97 259	98 296
Percentage of those enroling who graduate	58.30%	76.67%	69.02%	78.07%	73.19%	69.59%	70.91%
Percentage pass rate in final examinations	87.88%	81.26%	91.24%	98.66%	86.06%	98.54%	95.18%
Percentage of pupils repeating a general grade	4.57%	1.02%	1.55%	1.49%	2.24%	4.18%	3.85%
Percentage of pupils repeating a vocational grade	–	–	1.71%	1.53%	3.39%	3.96%	3.44%
Number of students admitted to higher education	18 434	21 402	16 452	24 331	31 205	33 388	41 511
Students admitted to higher education as a percentage of secondary education graduates in the same year	19.62%	18.13%	16.82%	24.78%	32.12%	31.16%	37.22%

Management structure



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This publication contains a brief description of secondary education in Bulgaria.
It constitutes one part of a series entitled "Guide to secondary education in Europe" developed as part of the project "A secondary education for Europe".
The aim of this series is to make accessible to the public not only a systematic and coherent exposition of the educational systems and traditions in all signatory states to the European Cultural Convention, but also to outline the essential problems these systems are facing at the present time.
Each book has been written by an expert from the country concerned on the basis of a questionnaire. The questionnaire was drawn up by Denis Kallen who has both co-ordinated the series and undertaken the editing of each text in collaboration with the author.
Given that this is an area in which changes take place particularly quickly and that the translation, revision and publication of the manuscript require a certain amount of time, there will be an opportunity to publish updated information for the Final Conference of the project in 1996.

Council of Europe Press

ISBN 92-871-2743-3